



THE ANIMAL-HUMAN BOND IN ITALIAN SOCIETY, ART, AND LITERATURE

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Roxann Prazniak

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 4

Contact Hours*: 40

SIENA, ITALY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Do animals make us human? Come contemplate this question under the Tuscan sun where urban dog walkers and park side bird watchers fill the morning air. Do Italian doggies behave like our poochies back home? Do they have Italian designer raincoats? Light heartedness aside, in museums we investigate how Italian art has represented creatures in different genres and historical periods. We might sketch some animals ourselves to gain a better feel for their motion and structure! We will examine Italian literature from the same perspective and perhaps write a story or two of our own.

Both natural and cultural, the animal-human bond is not the same everywhere.

Here is an opportunity to explore the complexities of a relationship that ranges from deep emotional attachment to utilitarian dissociation, all the while keeping in mind the favorite furry creatures you may have waiting for you back home. Recent research on the topic gives us a wealth of game-changer evidence to consider. Some authors go so far as to suggest that our understanding of animal creativity may be essential to our next evolutionary steps as humans. Within the European Union, Italy plays an important role in Wildlife Recovery projects that involve scientific studies, media coverage, and legislation. We will engage this topic with readings and guest speakers when possible.

This course will be of interest to students in environmental and ecological studies as well as the humanities and social sciences. Internships with animal welfare associations and therapy animal groups in Siena are possible. Guest speakers from media and legal professions will be included as scheduling allows.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce students to issues and debates within social and scientific literature on the relation of animal to human bond. This will be considered with the framework of Italian society, art, and literature.

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will:

- ❖ Improve research and writing skills.
- ❖ Improve individual and group presentation skills.
- ❖ Demonstrate knowledge of Italian history, social, artistic, and literary traditions.
- ❖ Develop interdisciplinary thinking and problem-solving skills.
- ❖ Demonstrate knowledge of recent research in animal studies.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course uses excursions, readings, discussion, guest visitors, journaling, mini-lectures, and film to explore the interaction between humans and animals in their Italian natural and social environments. Representations of animals in art and literature take us into some of the local art and natural history collections. We will read recent animal studies research to inform our discussions and observations.

Opportunities to learn from animal therapy personnel and animal shelter workers are part of our methodology.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

A journal of observations and personal accounts (weekly topics)	25%
Short quizzes for discussion of assigned readings	25%
Research Project	25%
Final Exam	25%

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to some changes once Siena Itinerary is known)

Week 1	Where the Wild Things Are and Are Not: Siena Table and Field <u>Excursion</u> : Visit Palazzo Pubblico and Lorenzetti's fresco of the Via Francigena
Week 2	Animal and Human Creativity <u>Reading</u> : Gigliotti, "Animal Intelligence: Pigeons and Higher Math"
Week 3	Class meetings in the park/Orto de'Pecci <u>or</u> the Fortezza <u>or</u> Giardini la Lizza <u>Reading</u> : Gigliotti, "Emotional Agency: The Empathy of Chickens" <u>Drawing</u> : Alexander Calder, <i>Animal Sketching</i> Journals due
Week 4	Scientific Representations of Animals: Early Siennese Collectors <u>Excursion</u> : Siena Museum of Natural History
Week 5	Visual Representation of Animals: Leonardo da Vinci <u>Reading</u> : Saiber, "What Leonardo da Vinci Learned from Animals" <u>Excursion</u> : Uffizi Gallery, Firenze
Week 6	Animal Messengers in Literature <u>Reading</u> : Attar, <i>The Conference of the Birds</i> ; Calvino, " <i>The Little Geese</i> " [Siena]; "Animal Speech" [Matua]; "The Fine Greenbird" [Florence] S. Naspini, <i>Nives</i> (the story of a small Tuscan town, a chicken, and a midnight phone call) Journals due
Week 7	Science and Medicine: The Healing Lick <u>Reading</u> : "Exploring Animal-Assisted Therapy in Italy"/ Seppälä, "How Animals Heal Us and Teach Us" <u>Excursion</u> : Siena Animal Therapy Center
Week 8	Urbanization and Creature Connections <u>Reading</u> : "The Case Against Pet Ownership"/ Martha Nussbaum on animal rights <u>Excursion</u> : Siena Animal Shelter or Clinica Veterinaria Senese
Week 9	Wildlife Recovery: Italy within the European Union <u>Reading</u> : TBA
Week 10	Epilogue and Future <u>Reading</u> : Gigliotti, "Creativity Has Its Reasons" Journals due Final exam or essay due

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section is intended for the faculty to cite references for lectures or course design, not to list the required texts of the course.

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Reporting

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at safe.uoregon.edu. To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour hotline at 541-346-7244 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-8136. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to Callisto, a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university.

Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information at respect.uoregon.edu or aaeo.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential AAEO office at 541-346-3123 or the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available at [Discrimination & Harassment](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration.

Specific details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees can be found at titleix.uoregon.edu.

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UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Students with Disabilities

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.